

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for this resolution authorizing and recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Allied landing at Normandy, France, during the Second World War. By supporting this resolution, we not only encourage Americans everywhere to honor the heroic deeds and the sacrifices made by the brave Allied troops on June 6, 1944, but we also take a moment to remember our personal debt to what is now known as the Greatest Generation.

Dedication to duty, love of freedom, these things drove these courageous men to undertake and accomplish a task that seemed impossible. Such a comprehensive operation was unheard of at the time, and these men knew the risks involved. On that day, June 6, 1944, when the beaches of Normandy were stormed in the face of intense opposition, over 6,500 American soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice so that true freedom could be restored to millions of people across the European continent.

It is interesting to note that I have two good friends who were there: Dr. Tommy McDonald from Marshfield, Missouri, a sniper on that day, a recipient of the Silver Star, wounded three times; Frank Luce, from my hometown of Lexington, who not only was at Normandy but he had three tanks shot out from under him and was the recipient of the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Mr. Speaker, this last Saturday I had the opportunity to have lunch with many American Legion veterans at Higginsville, Missouri, and any number of them were at day 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 at Normandy beach head. It was an honor and a privilege to meet with them and to thank them for their duty.

June 6, 1944, was a pivotal day. At the time, it was almost impossible to understand the full impact it would have, but here we are. Sixty years of reflection have shown that after the success of that landing, the tide of the war swung in favor of the Allies, and Adolf Hitler began his ultimate demise. Allied victory in World War II preserved freedom and humanity for millions of people and for every generation since.

On this day, we honor one generation of heroes. But as we do so, we cannot help but take a moment to remember that there is another generation making its mark right now in the middle of the deserts in the Middle East. Hundreds of thousands of men and women are currently serving overseas with the same dedication, the same love of freedom that made the landing at Normandy such a remarkable moment in history. Whether the year is 1944 or the year 2004, these individuals deserve our respect, and they deserve our gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to support this resolution, and I commend its authors for bringing it before us today.

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

In closing, I think this is a fitting tribute to the brave men who 60 years ago stormed the sandy beaches of Normandy, risking all, so that we might enjoy the freedoms that we have become accustomed to. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this resolution, a fitting honor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I urge the House to adopt this resolution in support of our many fine heroes that participated in D-Day on June 6, 1944.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate joint resolution, S.J. Res. 28.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CHARLES WILSON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4317) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic located in Lufkin, Texas, as the "Charles Wilson Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4317

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC, LUFKIN, TEXAS.

The Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic located in Lufkin, Texas, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Charles Wilson Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic". Any reference to such outpatient clinic in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Charles Wilson Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER).

(Mr. MILLER of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4317 would name the VA outpatient clinic in the city of Lufkin, Texas, for our former colleague, the honorable Charles Wilson of Texas. I did not have the opportunity to know Mr. Wilson during his time in Congress, but Members who worked with him remember Charlie Wilson for his steadfast support of our Nation's defense and intelligence operations.

Mr. Wilson's personal history is as spirited as the Lone Star State where he was born. Growing up in Lufkin in east Texas, he graduated from the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1956 and thereafter served honorably in the United States Navy. After serving in the Texas House of Representatives and the senate, Mr. Wilson was elected to Congress in 1972. Mr. WILSON represented the second congressional district of Texas for 12 terms. He retired in 1996 and has maintained a successful consulting business here in Washington and in his native Texas.

Over 20 years ago, as a Member of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Mr. Wilson focused his energy on the plight of the Afghan people, then under invasion by the old Soviet Union. Mr. Wilson's singular effort to sustain covert U.S. aid for the rebels in Afghanistan was a crucial resource for the Afghan people to drive the Soviets out of their country. Influenced by Mr. Wilson's work in Afghanistan, the U.S. Cold War operation contributed to the eventual collapse of the USSR. These events are vividly depicted in the recent book, "Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History."

I believe using any definition of the term, Charlie Wilson is an extraordinary man in foreign affairs and in intelligence matters. Closer to home, as an advocate for our veterans and our Armed Forces, who were his constituents in Texas, Mr. Wilson played a key role in convincing the VA to open an outpatient clinic in his hometown of Lufkin.

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The clinic can was dedicated in 1991, and it remains an important provider of health care to veterans in East Texas. I believe that our colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), the sponsor of this bill, will speak in greater detail about our former Member Charles Wilson.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4317, a bill to rename the Department of Veterans Affairs clinic in Lufkin, Texas, after a fellow Texan and our fellow Congressman Charles Wilson.

I appreciate the effort of my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Congressman TURNER), for sponsoring this particular piece of legislation; and I

am honored to manage the time today on behalf of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Charlie Wilson has had a remarkable and noteworthy career, and it is fitting to honor him by naming the VA clinic in Lufkin after him. He began his career at the prestigious U.S. Naval Academy, and he served in the Navy from 1956 to 1960. After he left the Navy, he decided to try his hand at elected office. He did well. He won his first race in 1960 and then got elected again 18 times for various offices.

He began his distinguished career representing the people of East Texas in the Texas House of Representatives for over 6 years and in the Texas Senate for an additional 3 terms. As a former member of the Texas house myself, I know the hard work and dedication required. I know Charlie Wilson gave it his all.

On November 7, 1972, in the 2nd District of Texas, Charlie Wilson was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. The House has not known many like him. For 24 years he represented the people of East Texas often in very colorful and unforgettable ways but always with a dedication and commitment to his constituents.

His hard work earned him a spot on the Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. He used his position not only to help Texas and America and also his constituents but to advance the United States' effort to win the Cold War and defeat the Soviet expansion. Perhaps most notably Charlie used his influence to secure billions of dollars to counter the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Without a doubt, his efforts helped push the Soviets out of Afghanistan and helped end the eastern bloc communism.

The CIA recognized the special nature of his efforts by making him the only civilian to receive the CIA's Honored Colleague Award. His work is now enshrined in a well-known book that may even become a movie.

While in Congress, Charlie made constituent service a top priority; and his staff regularly won praise for their hard work on behalf of the district. As a Korean War veteran, Charlie Wilson was always a strong advocate of veterans, especially in his district. He brought more veterans affairs resources to his constituents than ever before.

It is appropriate that we name the VA clinic in Lufkin for him, a proud Texan, a proud American, an outstanding veteran.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), who is the author of the legislation and also the ranking minority leader on the Select Committee on Homeland Security.

Mr. TURNER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas for

yielding. I want to thank all of my colleagues. I want to thank the distinguished majority leader from Texas for cosponsoring this legislation with me along with other colleagues from Texas.

This legislation, I think, does something that needs to be done, that should be done; and I think our former colleague, Congressman Charles Wilson, could think of nothing that he would rather for this Congress to do than to put his name on the veterans outpatient clinic in Lufkin, Texas, which is the largest community in our congressional district.

Charlie Wilson had a distinguished career in this body as well as in the Texas legislature. He served the public for over 36 years. He served three terms in the Texas house, three terms in the Texas Senate, and 12 terms in this body.

Charlie Wilson is, first and foremost, a soldier. In his very youngest years he dreamed of being a soldier, and he became a student of history because he loved to read about battles and about the great wars. He ended up being admitted to the Naval Academy and served both at home and abroad in the United States Navy with great distinction.

Charlie Wilson served in this body on the House Committee on Appropriations, and when he left this body he was the most senior Democrat on the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, and a senior Democrat on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. He was appointed to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in the 100th Congress.

Charlie Wilson became a recognized expert on defense and intelligence matters. And as the gentleman from Florida mentioned earlier, in the book "Charlie's War," the story is recounted of Charlie's devotion, commitment, and his enthusiastic efforts to help kick the Soviets out of Afghanistan. We all know that that was the last big battle before the Soviet Union fell, and many credit our efforts against the Soviets in Afghanistan as leading to the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Charlie Wilson believed in this country. He was a fierce fighter against the Communist influence that at that time was going around the world.

Charlie Wilson was recognized for his expertise not only in defense and intelligence but in the area of international energy policy. He served on the Energy Conference Committee that is responsible for the landmark comprehensive National Energy Act of 1978.

Charlie Wilson established the outpatient clinic in Lufkin. It was something that he really believed in, because in our part of this country and the rural piney woods of East Texas we have a large number of patriotic Americans who have served in the United States military. He knew that our veterans in our part of the State were having to travel over 100 miles to get to

the nearest VA hospital to receive care. Because Charlie was a veteran, because he believed in standing up for veterans and he believed that every veteran should be honored for the service they have given, he fought to establish this outpatient clinic in Lufkin; and it has served the people of our area very well.

Charlie Wilson worked hard during his career to serve the needs of all veterans and of all senior citizens, and he had in his office one of the largest case-loads of veterans work of any Member of Congress. I have been pleased, in succeeding him, to have carried on that responsibility of assisting the many veterans in deep East Texas.

Charlie Wilson was a colorful Member of Congress. One did not have to wonder where Charlie Wilson stood on the issues, and one did not have to know whether you were getting a straight story or not. Because whether Charlie was talking about an issue on the floor of the Congress or talking about something going on in his district or talking about something in his own personal life, he was always very candid with his constituents; and for that they reelected him 12 times to this body.

So I am very proud that my colleagues have joined with us in introducing this resolution honoring Charlie Wilson, and I would invite all Members to join with us in adopting it.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON), who also has the distinction of representing our Missing and Exploited Children Caucus and does a tremendous job in that area.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for allowing me to have a few seconds to talk about my friend Charlie Wilson.

We knew him at the beginning of his service in the Texas legislature as Timber Charlie, a tall, lanky, East Texan who, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) just said, always spoke as straight and as straightforward as one human being can.

What a nice gentleman. Many colorful stories obviously can and have been told about him. The people remembered him and loved him throughout all of East Texas.

I remember fondly the days he would come to all of those parades we would have through East Texas. He always had a mule that he saddled up and rode in the parade, wearing brightly colored clothes and those suspenders that were always his trademark. A wonderful, caring, human being.

Charlie Wilson probably taught me more about, and I think many of the other of his colleagues and those of the House that followed him, about the job of a Member of Congress providing constituent service. He prided himself on what he did for the people at home. And it was interesting a comment that was made in an article not long ago

when he said that when the day was done, says Charlie, the working people knew I was on their side. And the blacks knew I was on their side. It is hard to explain, but there is a tolerance for human frailty that does not exist outside of East Texas.

Charlie Wilson loved his folks, still does today, and will continue; and southeast Texas will never, ever forget him. The fact that we are honoring him there with the naming of this veterans' facility is a magnificent tribute to a wonderful gentleman.

We wish you well in your retirement, Charlie Wilson. I am glad to support my colleagues in supporting this legislation.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close with a little story that I read about Charlie Wilson. That was in his first campaign he talks about the fact that at one time when he came back from the Navy and was going to be running for office he thought that there was going to be a discussion about issues regarding taxes. He found out that, and according to the article, the story was that one of the biggest issues in East Texas at that time was that they were using dogs to hunt deer at that time way back in the early 1960s. And they got the impression that Charlie was against that, and they were extremely angry with him and upset. So one of the first things he talks about is going to deliver a speech among 3,000 people and bringing about five or six hounds with him.

So he was and is a very colorful individual. I take pride in being the manager for this bill, and I ask for the naming of the VA clinic in his name and in his honor.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this is a bipartisan bill. I urge all Members of this body to support H.R. 4317 to name the Lufkin, Texas, VA clinic the Charles Wilson Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4317.

A fellow Texan, Charlie Wilson was educated at the U.S. Naval Academy and served overseas as well as at the Pentagon. After retiring from the Navy in 1960 with the rank of Lieutenant, he returned back to Lufkin and ran successfully for the Texas Legislature, serving in that capacity for twelve years.

In 1972, Charlie was elected as the U.S. Representative for the 2nd Congressional District of Texas and began his distinguished 24-year career in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Naming the Lufkin VA Clinic in honor of Congressman Wilson would be a fitting tribute to such a devoted public servant.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4317.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4317.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS ACT OF 2004

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4060) to amend the Peace Corps Act to establish an Ombudsman and an Office of Safety and Security of the Peace Corps, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4060

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Health, Safety, and Security of Peace Corps Volunteers Act of 2004".

SEC. 2. OMBUDSMAN OF THE PEACE CORPS.

The Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 4 the following new section:

"SEC. 4A. OMBUDSMAN OF THE PEACE CORPS.

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Peace Corps the Office of the Ombudsman of the Peace Corps (hereinafter in this section referred to as the 'Office'). The Office shall be headed by the Ombudsman of the Peace Corps (hereinafter in this section referred to as the 'Ombudsman'), who shall be appointed by and report directly to the Director of the Peace Corps.

"(b) VOLUNTEER COMPLAINTS AND OTHER MATTERS.—The Ombudsman shall receive and, as appropriate, inquire into complaints, questions, or concerns submitted by current or former volunteers regarding services or support provided by the Peace Corps to its volunteers, including matters pertaining to—

"(1) the safety and security of volunteers;

"(2) due process, including processes relating to separation from the Peace Corps;

"(3) benefits and assistance that may be due to current or former volunteers;

"(4) medical or other health-related assistance; and

"(5) access to files and records of current or former volunteers.

"(c) EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS AND OTHER MATTERS.—The Ombudsman shall receive and, as appropriate, inquire into complaints, questions, or concerns submitted by current or former employees of the Peace Corps on any matters of grievance.

"(d) ADDITIONAL DUTIES.—The Ombudsman shall—

"(1) recommend responses to individual matters received under subsections (b) and (c);

"(2) make recommendations for administrative or regulatory adjustments to address recurring problems or other difficulties of the Peace Corps;

"(3) identify systemic issues that relate to the practices, policies, and administrative procedures of the Peace Corps affecting volunteers and employees; and

"(4) call attention to problems not yet adequately considered by the Peace Corps.

"(e) STANDARDS OF OPERATION.—The Ombudsman shall carry out the duties under this section in a manner that is—

"(1) independent, impartial in the conduct of inquiries, and confidential; and

"(2) consistent with the revised Standards for the Establishment and Operation of Ombudsman Offices (August 2003) as endorsed by the American Bar Association.

"(f) INVOLVEMENT IN MATTERS SUBJECT TO ONGOING ADJUDICATION, LITIGATION, OR INVESTIGATION.—The Ombudsman shall refrain from any involvement in the merits of individual matters that are the subject of ongoing adjudication or litigation, or investigations related to such adjudication or litigation.

"(g) REPORTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, and semiannually thereafter, the Ombudsman shall submit to the Director of the Peace Corps, the Chair of the Peace Corps National Advisory Council, and Congress a report containing a summary of—

"(A) the complaints, questions, and concerns considered by the Ombudsman;

"(B) the inquiries completed by the Ombudsman;

"(C) recommendations for action with respect to such complaints, questions, concerns, or inquiries; and

"(D) any other matters that the Ombudsman considers relevant.

"(2) CONFIDENTIALITY.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall maintain confidentiality on any matter that the Ombudsman considers appropriate in accordance with subsection (e).

"(h) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term 'employee' means an employee of the Peace Corps, an employee of the Office of Inspector General of the Peace Corps, an individual appointed or assigned under the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3901 et seq.) to carry out functions under this Act, or an individual subject to a personal services contract with the Peace Corps."

SEC. 3. OFFICE OF SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE PEACE CORPS.

The Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.), as amended by section 2 of this Act, is further amended by inserting after section 4A the following new section:

"SEC. 4B. OFFICE OF SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE PEACE CORPS.

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Peace Corps the Office of Safety and Security of the Peace Corps (hereinafter in this section referred to as the 'Office'). The Office shall be headed by the Associate Director of Safety and Security of the Peace Corps, who shall be appointed by and report directly to the Director of the Peace Corps.

"(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Office established under subsection (a) shall be responsible for all safety and security activities of the Peace Corps, including background checks of volunteers and staff, safety and security of volunteers and staff (including training), safety and security of facilities, security of information technology, and